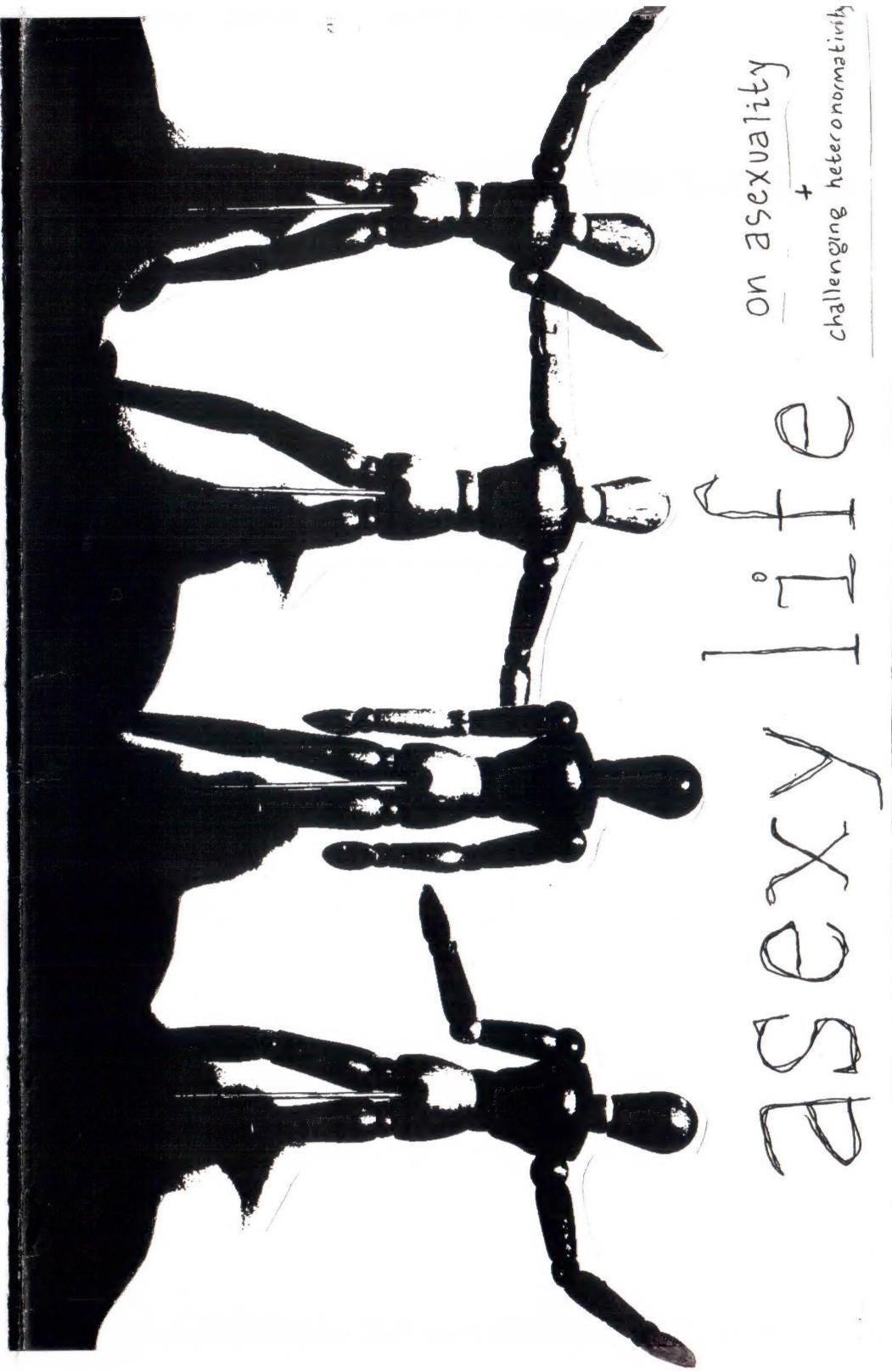


"...it's a simple yet radical affirmation that we each grow our own passions on a different medium, that instead of two or three or even half a dozen sexual orientations, we should be thinking in terms of millions..."

- Carol Queen



Hey all,

I'm glad that you've picked this up, because you probably have some interest in asexuality, or more generally, in sexuality. I believe that more open discussions on asexuality would be beneficial for everyone, as it facilitates a new, fresh space to consider different forms of intimacy and relationships.

I've put together a zine on asexuality for this reason - it's a topic that needs to gain more attention; though recently, even if only on a small scale, people *have* been hearing about it. Unfortunately, much of what has been published on asexuality is full of false descriptions and definitions that paint simplistic asexual stereotypes.

I hope that this zine can clear up any misunderstandings on the topic that you may have, in addition to providing you with more information.

Asexual visibility is *absolutely indispensable*, if asexuals hope to ever be fully treated with respect and have their sexual orientation viewed as legitimate. Currently, we're excluded from most conversations on sexual orientation and sexuality, whether they be casual or in the classroom. This is unfortunate, because as a result of our invisibility, people are unaware of the issues we face – many of which NOT ONLY ASEXUALS face, but that are widespread among people who do not/cannot fit-in heterosexist societies (hey queers!). People must stop assuming (as they often do) that the term 'heterosexual' can be applied to everyone. Heterosexuality must stop being viewed as the "natural" sexual orientation, simply because it may be the most common. Education is needed on differing sexualities.

People need to grasp that sexuality is very complex and that there exists so much more than just heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality (though bisexuals are often invisible too). I hope that more people will continue to become aware of asexuality, gray-A, and demisexuality in the coming years so that we can focus more attention on eliminating the heterosexism and heteronormativity that permeates society and that is so harmful to all of us. I hope that through this zine, people will gain a better understand of asexuality and that the work will prompt people to think further on subjects such as sexuality, gender, sex, relationships, and their connections to how these subjects play out in their communities.

#### ++ more resources! +++

Online asexuality resources (in case you'd like to learn more):

Apositive – [apositive.org](http://apositive.org)  
Asexual Visibility and Education Network (AVEN) – [asexuality.org](http://asexuality.org)  
Asexual Explorations - [asexualexplorations.net](http://asexualexplorations.net)  
Asexy Beast - [theonepercentclub.blogspot.com](http://theonepercentclub.blogspot.com)  
Love from the Asexual Underground  
(blog by David Jay, founder of AVEN) -  
[asexualunderground.blogspot.com](http://asexualunderground.blogspot.com)

+Check out the first issue of ~~the~~ Asexual Feminism, a zine!  
[asexualfeminism@gmail.com](mailto:asexualfeminism@gmail.com)

+HotPiecesofAce – collaborative YouTube channel made up of fifteen members of the asexual community who discuss a new topic each week, often suggested by viewers. ([HotPiecesofAce@gmail.com](mailto:HotPiecesofAce@gmail.com))

+Director Angela Tucker, based in NYC, is now working on editing *Asexuality: the Making of a Movement*, a documentary on asexuality





This zine was compiled during **summer 2010**. If you have any questions, musings, or comments, you can email me at [asexy.life.zine@gmail.com](mailto:asexy.life.zine@gmail.com)

Feel free to make copies of this zine and distribute it as you wish. You may use any material in it as long as it is properly credited. Email me for a link to the .pdf version.

A **big thanks** to all the contributors, the online asexual community, :mar and kat for going through this first and commenting, and you, for expressing interest and picking this up.

I wholeheartedly encourage everyone to go out, start conversations about sexual orientations, and challenge any harmful norms about sex, gender, and sexuality you come across!

Smash patriarchy, anyone?

I consider myself very lucky to have learned about asexuality relatively early in my life (at about the age of 17/18). Throughout most of high school, my asexuality, combined with low levels and rare occurrences of romantic attraction left me confused and alienated. I never mentioned to anyone the crush I had on a female friend for two years because it made absolutely *no sense* to me. I could not understand the nature of the attraction I felt. There was infatuation and romantic emotion, but no sexual feeling. I remember always casually asking people about how they felt towards their friends, their partners, and the difference between the two, desperately hoping for some form of clarification. What I felt fit neither of the descriptions I received. Applying the term "lesbian" to myself (in my head) never seemed right, but neither did "straight," or anything else I could think of. Luckily, one day, someone directed the term 'asexual' to me (ironically using it incorrectly), which sparked me to look into it and finally find elucidation.

It's unfortunate that there is no space for education about differing sexualities and that people feel shame about their feelings/attractions. There was no room in my household for "deviant" sexualities and therefore certainly no room for discussion about my attraction. This is a problem for queer youth everywhere. It is essential that we create these safe spaces and discussions and commit to consciousness-raising.

I know that there are older asexuals who have lived most of their lives in confusion, and who still do. I know that there are asexuals ALL OVER THE WORLD who do not have this information. I only wish that, in the future, there will be more resources about minority sexualities so that early on, people can understand that they are not alone, and that more importantly, nothing is wrong with them for being unable to fit the label 'heterosexual.'

I'm including the voices of asexuals and people who may not identify with the label, but who have chosen to live a type of asexual lifestyle. I want you to hear the voices of those who, in many of our heteronormative societies (and communities), are often patronized and looked on as inferior. For some reason today, not having sex really freaks people out.

-NB

## ASEXUAL (n) - a person that does not experience sexual attraction

Asexuality is NOT:

- a choice\* (therefore, it is NOT celibacy, though celibates can be asexual, and vice versa)
- a dysfunction
- the inability to have sex
- the lack of a sex drive (though there are asexuals that do not have one)
- sexual repression
- fear of relationships or inability to start/maintain them
- fear/hatred/repulsion of sex

Unfortunately (and due to lack of education on the topic), these are some of many misconceptions about asexuality. Often times, people equate asexuality with aromanticism (defined on page 6). I notice this often when talking about asexuality or in hearing the experiences of others coming out to family and friends. In articles online, it is frequently assumed that asexuals do not form romantic relationships and that they wish/intend to always be single. However, many, if not most, asexuals are romantic, meaning that they do express interest in forming intimate-partner relationships, most of the time with sexual people (because after all, they do make up 99% of the population). These relationships of course differ greatly with respect to occurrence of sexual activity depending on the nature and/or agreement of the people involved.



\*While asexuality is not a choice, I do not include this particular information with the intention to legitimize the orientation. Even if asexuality (or any other orientation, for that matter) were a choice, it should be respected and fully acknowledged. I think that far too often, people use the line, "but we didn't choose this," to make arguments about authenticity. In the long run, this further hurts people who do not identify as heterosexual because it only gains them "acceptance," and "toleration." Rather, society needs to transform so that it is genuinely open to difference instead of fearing anything that is unlike the norm.

I remember once watching a sex documentary and there being two lesbians discussing sex and what they do. I remember thinking 'if you want all these toys, why don't you get a man?' I was eleven and now I know why they don't have sex with men. I doubt I would have learnt about any of that if it hadn't been for my own confused identity. As interested as I am in minorities I only searched and educated myself because I wanted to find a place for me.

When I mean 'a place for me' I don't necessarily mean a community, I am part of many, but just a title. It stops the continuous questions going around in your head. Hearing about asexuality basically blew the sexuality box I had been thinking inside of for so long apart and into a million tiny pieces.

I first came out to one of my friends as soon as I discovered the term and I felt it suited me perfectly. Her initial reaction was that such a thing could not be and I had to be homosexual. She was hostile about it so I stopped the conversation. Six months later I set the task to myself to come out completely. I never want people when I'm older to ask when I'm going to have children, have sex, all of those questions. If I explain it to them now they'll understand not to ask. In those six months my friend had done some research on asexuality and was much more welcoming and happy to accept me. My mother also was first doubtful of such a thing but though we never talk about it, the fact she had complaints about me going to a foreign country just to go to a meet-up means she realises it's something I care a lot about even if she doesn't understand it.

Asexuality has made me understand the world around me a lot better though in itself doesn't affect my life day to day except with what joining the various websites has given me: information, friends, understanding, a community I feel a part of and acknowledgement that what I feel is okay.

Given Me  
R. Adams

Asexuality isn't a bad thing, though neither is it automatically good. It's something neutral, like any want or lack of want. Similar to desiring a cup of coffee – how can not wanting a cup of coffee be considered not weird? Drinking coffee is so common, everybody does it, but it's accepted that we have different food tastes – why not with love?

We each imagine our futures differently, our ideal future. Wife and kids, married with adoptees, etc. It's impossible for us to all want the same thing. I can no longer understand people who don't understand that we're all different.

I didn't decide to not like coffee nor did I choose asexuality. Asexuality doesn't fit with how I view the world, my view of the world fits with asexuality.

Discovering such an idea has been extremely educational. You get introduced to one minority and sure enough another pops up, and another and what you learn about humans expands daily with this influx of people going 'this is how I feel and think.'

To know about asexuality one must know about sexual desire and various other human feelings and the introduction to such a concept was so important to me. It's something I never realised until somebody pointed it out to me. I'm not one of the great thinkers of the world so the obvious must be pointed out to me and afterwards I am always grateful. Not only do I understand myself better but everybody around me.



## ROMANTIC ATTRACTION

For the most part, the asexual community recognizes **both** sexual orientation and romantic orientation. For example, an asexual who identifies as romantic, though not sexually attracted to ANYONE of ANY gender (factors which define asexuality), can experience romantic attraction to women, men, women and men, or any other combinations. Terms such as heteroromantic, homoromantic, biromantic, panromantic, are commonly used to describe these attractions.

It may be helpful to acknowledge that most **sexual** people experience at least some level of sexual attraction simultaneous to experiencing romantic attraction towards a person. In turn, for sexuals, it may be difficult to imagine a romantic attraction stripped of sexual attraction.

## AROMANTICISM

Of course, there are also aromantic asexuals. Aromanticism is the lack of romantic attraction or, in some cases, the lack of a desire/need to translate romantic attraction into something further, such as a relationship.

aromanticism ≠ asexuality

The label 'aromantic' can be applied to both asexuals and sexuals, though it is used far more often among the gray-A/asexuality community.

## *Label Madness*

Ulrike

Label madness. That is the only way humans see each other. I never had a problem with my labeling. I was always a heterosexual female, an artsy, eccentric tomboy female, but heterosexual nonetheless. I guess WAS is the number-one word here.

Relationships are extremely complicated, yet they always seemed way too complicated for me. I grew up obsessing over actors like most little girls. Leonardo DiCaprio's face plastered my walls. From there it was Antonio Banderas and his chocolate-dark eyes, and then Dave Foley, Edward Norton, Brad Pitt (gotta love the Fight Club duo after all), Ewan McGregor, Tim Roth, and presently Robert Downy Jr. Ok, I'll even add the anime character Vegeta into the mix. With all these crushes there was no way I was 'different' than all the other girls I grew up with! Only, why was I the only one without a boyfriend? Better yet, why was I the only one who felt no attraction toward the act of sex? With all those 'hot' actors, didn't that mean I was sexually attracted to them? I would later discover that my perception of physical attraction was not based on sexual attraction. In fact, I had never been sexually attracted to another person in my entire life.

As I got older, I forced myself into the dating world. I allowed the random boyfriend to kiss me and go through the modes of a relationship, eventually moving into sex and the loss of virginity. It was...weird. I think that's the best way to describe it. There were some fun moments, but honestly, peering over my boyfriend's trembling shoulders to watch Zoolander while he went to work revealed to me that something was not totally conventional. After the first relationship disaster I tried once more, getting even worse results with a verbally and emotionally abusive boyfriend. Although these experiences were not positive, they finally caused me to search for others like me.

I did not imagine that there was anyone out there who flat-out did not enjoy sex or find others sexually attractive. It had always been confusing for me because I have always felt sexual attraction toward images, writing, certain themes, and my own thoughts, yet the idea of sharing sex with another person has always left me with a feeling of unease, fear, or avid disinterest. Could people actually fall into an area of sexual and non-sexual interest?

"When you say things like 'shuddering ew,' that makes me think that you *have* had a crush, and you're trying to hide it by pretending to be grossed out."

I was furious and disgusted—well, I was an emotional twelve-year-old. I don't remember exactly what I said next, but it was to the effect of "that's not true; I really am grossed out and don't want to have crushes on boys." I was acting melodramatic, but I was panicking at the idea that my mother didn't believe something that I knew with such certainty.

My mother gave me a maddening, superior smile and said (this I remember exactly): "Methinks she doth protest too much."

I didn't say anything after that. I couldn't think of what to say, because the only thing I wanted to do was scream with frustration. Was I overreacting? Probably, but the fact remains that I can't stand it when people think I'm lying about my lack of sexual attraction. I'm not a liar, and it IS possible to not want sex.



### *Methinks She Doth Protest Too Much*

Melissa Maranto

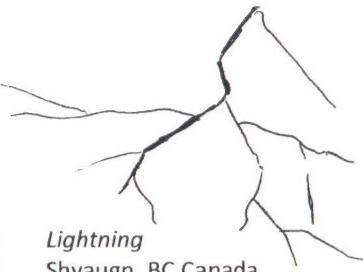
One of the hardest things about being asexual is people not believing you are asexual. Well, at least it's hard for me, since I am infuriated by people thinking things about me that aren't true, especially if a) it's something about my basic character and b) there's no proof that they are wrong. If it's a stranger or a casual acquaintance who doesn't believe I'm asexual, I can deal with that. But one of my first incidences of not being believed (when it came to my asexuality) happened with my mother, and, well, it was a very, very unpleasant experience.

I remember sitting at the kitchen table talking to my mother. I was in seventh grade, or maybe sixth. We were discussing middle school romance; I believe I was complaining about how one of my friends was so boy-crazy and so easily affected by the actions and emotions of her crushes. I was probably expressing concern about doing the same thing myself once I started having crushes; I didn't want to be swept off my feet. I liked my feet firmly on the ground. My mother was trying to a) reassure me that I'd be less emotional about my love interests when I had them and b) yes, I would have love interests, and soon. I still believed at that point that I would eventually develop a crush, but the concept of being attracted to one of the unhygienic, sex-obsessed males in my grade was utterly foreign to me. True, not all of the boys I knew were unhygienic and sex-obsessed, but I still the idea disgusting. So during the conversation with my mother, who I thought was well aware that I had no romantic interest in boys, I uttered the sentence "When I do start liking boys—shuddering eww—I hope I don't act as crazy about them as my friend Allie." Well, I don't remember the second half of that statement exactly, but I remember saying "shuddering eww," where "eww" was a sound made to express disgust. And my mother replied:

It has been about two months since I 'came out' as a Gray-A asexual. Actually, in the most basic terms, I am an aromantic heterosexual self-sexual Gray-A asexual. Ah, but that label is quite extensive, isn't it? Yet, it seems that no one is happy unless everyone has a label for one's self. What does this mean precisely? I have always been quite turned-off by romance and kissing, I am attracted to men over women, I get along fine with my solo acts in private, and I feel no interest in ever having sex or finding a sexual partner again. This will lead into a difficult life of constant questioning and people explaining to me that there's something wrong with me. But alas, that is what most people with asexual characteristics must learn to live with.

There is the orientation of asexual, which means having no sexual attraction. From there we move into demisexual, gray-a, functionally asexual, aromantic, romantic asexual, hetero-romantic, homo-romantic, bi-romantic, pan-romantic, and many more levels of asexuality. I have found that some people just prefer to not discuss their 'label.' Human beings want sexuality to be so black and white, but it can never be. Humans are individual minds and bodies. What works for one person, does not always work for another. Of course, since this involves sex, people practically have to wear a badge that screams a person's orientation. I think society can still survive, though, if there are people out there who are just not interested in having sex.

High school labeling was hard enough and as we move into a world of change, we must now label our sexuality. Cosmopolitan and Maxim tell us how much sex is 'a healthy amount,' and everyone must now be heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or any other 'sexual.' When I feel like it, I'll tell others I am gray-a, but I fear the bombardment of questions and accusations that will follow. If you are just trying to figure out who or what you are, don't worry about what society tells you. Remember, people will always think they know you better than you know yourself. No matter what you are, you will be met with possible confusion, anger, pessimism, or pure curiosity, so just understand the most important thing: You are you.



Sometimes I don't like to start thinking too hard. When I start to imagine that the world is actually a dream, or I try to think about the way our eyes work, my head starts to hurt. Because half the time I feel like I'm just floating along.

So the day I got hit by lightning was a good one.

If I can find a definition that makes sense to me, why can't I use it? You say that you don't want me to miss anything, not to get too wrapped up in labels because that's what I do. I keep hearing that over and over again, from you, the doctor, and the counselor... I know. You don't need to keep telling me this because once was enough.

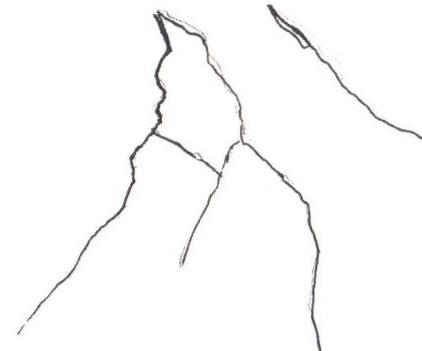
Wouldn't it be better to embrace the moment rather than sit there dejected on the steps waiting for lighting to strike again? For a miracle to happen and to meet somebody who I'll fall in love with and want to sleep with? I know it's possible but wouldn't it take time for that to happen? Shouldn't I enjoy myself as how I identify at this moment?

Because what if it doesn't happen? And I'm fine with either direction my life could take. Sexuality is too dark with various shades of unknown gray for me to make much sense of how I'm feeling. That takes time and all roads have a starting point.

This is my starting point.

You say you don't want me to get hurt. There's enough to hurt me on this planet without falling in love. I can't pretend to be happy in a box; I've been in one for too long for various reasons. Life is never better in a box no matter how pretty the wrapping is.

Can't I learn to accept this and realize that the world's different in many shapes and forms? Can't I grow as a person and become who I want to be as I cut away the roots of childhood? Because everyone does that and I need to be able to grow wings.



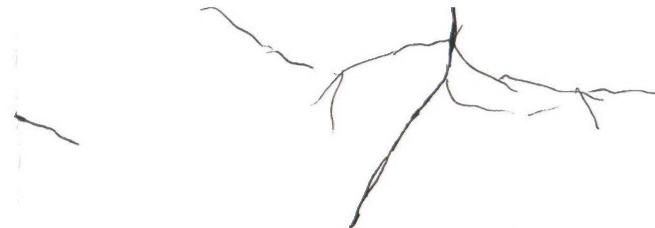
# Sex

Then there are those who protest, "But surely, if you enjoy thinking about it so much you must really want to do it!" To that I say that I'm also fascinated by serial killers—it doesn't mean I'm planning a spree. I find many things I'm not personally interested in utterly captivating. Their very popularity is what mystifies and compels me. Certain celebrities (whose massive popularity despite their lack of talent or intelligence) fall into the same category.

Having no vested interest in sex can give a person a more unprejudiced view of the mattress rodeo. From a purely anthropological view sex is grossly inaccurately portrayed by the media, abstinence-only education is an excellent way to support the tide of unwanted pregnancy and STDs, and people aren't doing nearly as many kinky things as frequently as you might think.

Something I love about being a sex positive asexual are the responses from sexual people I receive. People never expect you to have seen a porno or know what bukkake is, let alone where the G-spot is located or that the real person in control in a dominant-submissive scene is the submissive partner. There is a special kind of joy in being able to talk unflappably about things that turn even your most liberal friends a lovely puce. They want to know why I'm such a pervo and I say that sex is like a restaurant—sexual people find the things they like and stay with that part of the menu, but asexuals (of the sex positive variety) wander by the buffet and check everything out because it's all odd to us. Sure, some things are at the farther end of the wowwee spectrum, but for the most part it's all baffling to us. We're not thinking of ourselves in those situations so it's more academic and less personal. Sex positive asexuals can be a sex positive sexual's best ally.

And, of course, we don't mind listening to you bitch about how annoying sex is, either.



## Why I'm a Sex-Positive Asexual

Victoria Craven, North Carolina, USA

Sex is great. Fan-bloody-tastic. Not only is it fun, it's good for you. Burns calories, reduces stress, lowers risk of heart attack, prostate cancer and endometriosis, reaffirms the emotional bond between partners. If people spent more time blowing each other they'd have less time to blow each other up—Make Love, Not War and all that. I love sex. More people should have it (safely). I don't feel compelled to jump in the pile, but that doesn't mean I don't think anyone else who wants to shouldn't. There are a lot worse things people could be doing with their bodies.

Yes, I'm one of those sex-positive asexuals, which some take to mean an asexual who has sex, but I'm at a loss to find a better phrase for being asexual but endorsing sex as healthy and natural. Some asexuals think every single thing to do with the act is gross, gross, gross and want to hear, see or think about none of it. Those people make me feel lucky that I find sex interesting, intellectually at least, because hating sex while living in the modern world would be rather like disdaining oxygen. It's everywhere, so either find something about it interesting or resign yourself to being a life-long grump monkey.

I've been interested in sex since I was a pre-teen. As a teenager I realised that though I found sex fascinating the physical act didn't interest me. That discovery didn't dampen my intellectual interest, however; it made sex even more interesting because it seemed such a driving force for so many people even though it wrecks lives and can have disastrous consequences. Anything with that kind of power is inherently fascinating, as are the ever-shifting social mores and taboos.

Maybe I'm repressed. (How do you know?)  
Maybe I haven't met the right person yet. (Quite possible. Life is long.)  
Maybe I'm too young to decide all this. (Again quite possible. But would you tell me this if I came out to you as gay?)  
Maybe I'm just dense. (That's possible but I don't think so. Everyone has an area in which they lack an innate understanding.)  
Maybe I'm gay. (Pretty sure I'm not, but I'm open to the idea of falling in love with whomever.)  
Maybe I'm just curious about alternative lifestyles. (Because I find them easier to connect to because the message of how I'm supposed to act because I'm 'straight' doesn't work for me.)

Maybe I'm asexual.

For now. And that's fine with me.  
Because I keep looking at the world around me and I tend to gravitate to things that are close to what I'm looking for. The closer I get, the better it feels but I need to find something that clicks like that and something I want to stick with. Similar to a career in my opinion. There's no point if it doesn't feel right to you.

So maybe I'll get hit by lighting again one day. Just like the day when I was fifteen and I was sitting on my bedroom floor with my back against the bed, reading that book on GLBTQ youth. Because I can relate being an ally and research what I don't have a good understanding on. I didn't feel like I was straight so I thought that I must be gay. That wouldn't have worked out though. It's sad how we often only see two sides of a coin, instead of the array of possible angles available in this world.

Those pieces never seemed to fit well enough though so I kept turning them over and over hoping that one day it would all make sense.

I got hit by lightning though because I found a term in the glossary that made sense for the first time.

I got hit by lightning, broke down and had to build myself up again. For I'm a creation of my own being, not yours or anyone else's. I needed to find something to hold me together, because for the first time, something seemed to fit.

So now I identify as asexual.

# Positive

# Edward Gorey



was  
ASEXUAL

just like 1% of the  
adult population

Jac, UK



I felt it needed to be clarified:  
Being asexual does NOT mean  
you don't have sex  
you don't want to have sex  
you've never had sex  
you don't enjoy sex

IT ONLY MEANS:

YOU ARE NOT SEXUALLY ATTRACTED  
TO PEOPLE

of course, many of these things may  
be true for an asexual but  
let's not confuse a sexual  
orientation with sexual  
behavior, ever.



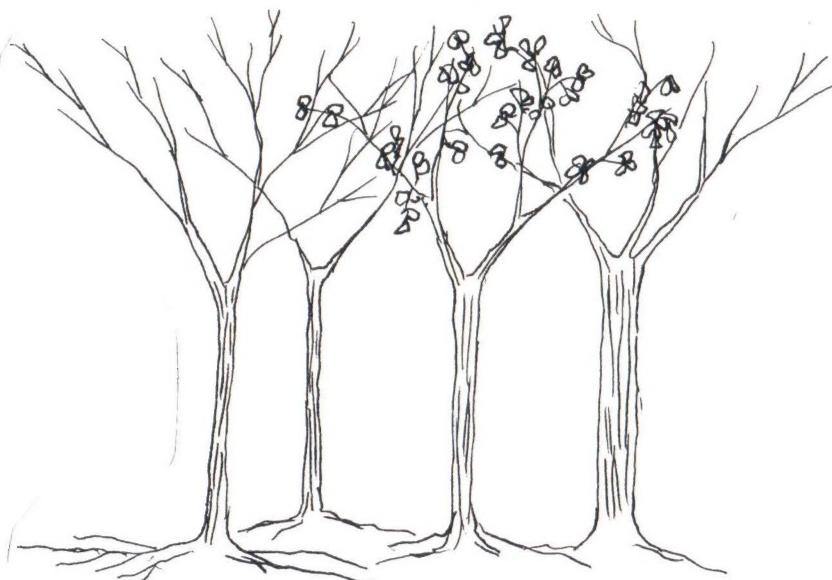
## ON THE STIGMA OF SEXUAL INACTIVITY

The focus on "sexual liberation" has always carried with it the assumption that the goal of such effort is to make it possible for individuals to engage in more and/or better sexual activity. Yet one aspect of sexual norms that many people find oppressive is the assumption that one "should" be engaged in sexual activity. This "should" is one expression of sexual coercion. Advocates of sexual liberation often imply that any individual who is not concerned about the quality of their experience or exercising greater sexual freedom is mentally disturbed or sexually repressed. When primary emphasis is placed on ending sexual oppression rather than on sexual liberation, it is possible to envision a society in which it is as much an expression of sexual freedom to choose not to participate in a sexual activity as it is to choose to participate.

Sexual norms as they are currently socially constructed have always privileged sexual expression over sexual desire. To act sexual is deemed natural, normal; to not act, unnatural, abnormal. Such thinking corresponds with sexist role patterning.

-BELL HOOKS

*From Margin to Center*



## DEMISEXUALITY

This term is used to refer to people who experience only secondary sexual attraction and no primary sexual attraction, meaning that sexual attraction would occur **only** after a very deep emotional and romantic bond has been secured with another person. For demisexuals, while other forms of attraction, like romantic attraction, may arise partly due to another person's appearance, sexual attraction does not.

This should not be confused with choosing to engage in sexual activity with a person only after getting to know them very well, despite there existing sexual attraction beforehand. Nor does demisexuality infer that there exists a soul mate for everyone, or any "perfect" partner.

Like asexuality, demisexuality is not a choice. It is not a path taken by people who believe that in this way they will live commendably. It is not some virtuous choice made by morally conservative individuals.

Demisexuality may fall under the category of **gray-A (gray area)**, which refers to an area between asexual and sexual (sexuality is complex, after all). People who fall under the gray-A category may experience very minimal amounts of sexual attraction, experience sexual attraction but have a very low sex-drive, etc.

The gray-A category is significant to the asexual community (and vice versa) because gray-A identifiers frequently share similar experiences with asexuals and may find that the asexual community discusses topics highly pertinent to their lives. Societal expectations that everyone must have/love sex often affect people identifying as gray-A or who choose to be celibate just as much as they affect asexuals.

People who identify as asexual or gray-A, and sexuals who choose celibacy are often associated with being extremely morally uptight and as supporters of abstinence-only sex education. When people assume these things, it is obvious they do not view or understand asexuality as a legitimate sexual orientation. Simultaneously, they assume celibates have some case of righteous sexual prudery. They miss the fact that celibacy may be very healthy and/or self-affirming for some individuals. Nobody is suggesting that anybody adopt any of these behaviors or lifestyles. No one is bashing sex.

## Incorporal Evolution

Christy Leigh Stewart

After a revolving door of doctors in and out of my family's lives, my mother got a call at work informing her: "Your daughter has Muscular Dystrophy and she'll probably die before she is two years old." The delivery of this news was devastating, as my parents both had dreamed for a large family and after years of intimate work they only had me to show for it, and now here I was, dying.

Needless to say, I'm not just a bright two year old, I've made it past a great many death sentences before research discovered that what I have is Spinal Atrophy Muscular Dystrophy type 2, meaning I have a little while to go before I die, but in the meantime I'll be the beneficiary of government assistance and a guest pass to the best parking available. As surely as I came to expect these perks, I expected a life (albeit a short life) of celibacy.

People as disabled as I am don't have romances on TV or in movies; we are either the inspirational martyr or the bitter extra in a hospital drama. People as disabled as I am don't have love lives or children, they live in rest homes once they reach majority. People as disabled as I am are asexual. People as disabled as I am don't get a choice in the matter. Or, at least that's what my perception was as a child. I miraculously got older and even though nothing on TV changed, I met people who were severely disabled and yet had still gotten married and had children. Furthermore, these people weren't the kind that got paralyzed on a college ski trip, these were people with genetic diseases like me.

I got older and I learned that my romantic and sexual interests in others didn't necessarily come unrequited. There were some men (and this only happened once they became men) that were open to dating me. Like real, non-crippled people do. I thought this was an anomaly at first. I told myself even if I could date I wouldn't date someone weird enough to go out with me. People who liked disabled people had a fetish and dating someone else with a disability never crossed my mind. I was a normal person and even crippled-normal-people aren't attracted to other crippled people.

Then, all of a sudden, a good friend of mine, who was normal and non-crippled, suggested that we should date. He said I was his best friend and that he loved me. He said he didn't care that I was in a wheelchair or that I would die a lot sooner than he would. He even insisted that my dedication to virginity was a non-issue. We didn't need to have sex, he was happy to be with me, there was more to love than sex. He told me I had an option to live an asexual lifestyle or not, that it was a decision for even the least-normal of not-normal people.

As romantic and wonderful as he made it all seem I was now facing what felt like a paradox. As someone who lives a very inflexible reality an opportunity for a new paradigm is almost irresistible, but not impossible. I declined his and every subsequent offer of a romantic relationship.

It's not as if I was bemoaning my virginity or lack of romantic love. I took it as a matter of fact like everything else in life, with all the good and bad that comes along with it; I cannot run. I do not have to attend PE. I cannot have sex. I won't ever get an STD. It wasn't until I realized virginity wasn't, in fact, a matter of fact, that I actually took it into consideration at all.

What did I feel about my virginity?

Was I ashamed of it? No.

Was I resentful of it? No.

Was I hiding behind it? No.

Should I lose it? No.

I've taken my life situation as an opportunity to evolve spiritually and intellectually, and taking pride in my virginity is, to me, a great sign of my incorporal evolution.